

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 CCO-00 CIAE-00

OTPE-00 FCC-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 OC-05 USIA-06 COME-00

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R 070948Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9559

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETEL, BTIO, TS

SUBJ: TUNISIAN SECOND THOUGHTS ON SECAM

REFS: TUNIS 677; TUNIS 7645, DEC 12, 1974 (NOTAL)

1. RECENT TUNISIAN PRESS REPORTS INDICATE GOT RECONSIDERING ITS PRIOR COMMITMENT TO PURCHASE FRENCH SECAM COLOR TELEVISION SYSTEM AS REPORTED TUNIS 677. REASON FOR SECOND THOUGHTS ARE REPORTED TO BE CHANGE FROM SECAM TO PAL BY OTHER ARAB STATES INCLUDING JORDAN, KUWAIT, QATAR, UAE, AND OMAN; REPORTS THAT ALGERIA CONSIDERING SUCH A CHANGE; AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF PAL SYSTEM. FURTHER INCENTIVE FOR TUNISIANS TO CONSIDER PAL IS LIKELY ITALIAN ADOPTION THAT SYSTEM AND CONSEQUENT TUNISIAN DESIRE TO BE CAPABLE OF RECEIVING ITALIAN DIRECT BROADCAST.

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CASTS. PRESS REPORTS STATE THAT TUNISIA IS RETAINING

ITS 1971 "OPTION IN PRINCIPLE" FOR SECAM BUT THAT IT EXPECTS "COMPENSATION" FROM FRANCE IF SECAM IS TO BE CHOSEN. SUCH COMPENSATION COULD BE IN FORM OF FRENCH PARTICIPATION AND ASSISTANCE IN CONSTRUCTION OF NEW TUNISIAN TELEVISION BROADCAST CENTER.

2. COMMENT: THESE REPORTS, SEVERAL MONTHS AFTER APPARENTLY FIRM TUNISIAN DECISION FOR SECAM, SEEM TO INDICATE GROWING TUNISIAN DESIRE TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH OTHER ARAB STATES AND ITALIANS AT EXPENSE OF LOOSENING ITS TRADITIONAL BROADCAST TIES WITH FRANCE. TUNISIANS CLEARLY EXPECT SUBSTANTIAL FRENCH QUID QUO PRO TO INDUCE THEM TO MAKE FIRM DECISION IN FAVOR OF SECAM. TECHNICAL DIRECTOR OF RTT, MONGI CHAFAI, INDICATED TO EMBOFF THAT TUNISIA WILL PROBABLY REQUIRE RECEIVES TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH BOTH SYSTEMS, LEAVING TRANSMISSION AS MAJOR QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED. IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION, IT APPEARED THAT CHAFAI AN ADVOCATE OF PAL ON TECHNICAL GROUNDS AS HE STRONGLY DENIED THAT FIRM DECISION IN FAVOR OF SECAM HAD BEEN MADE. ALTHOUGH PAL CLOSER TO US SYSTEM, MAJOR IMPLICATION FOR US IS IN AREA OF NEW TRANSMISSION FACILITY WITH REQUIRED TEST AND MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT WHICH IS NEUTRAL TO SYSTEM ADOPTED. REGARDING RATHER BLATANT MANNER TUNISIAN PRESS HAS TIED CHOICE OF SECAM TO FRENCH WILLINGNESS FINANCE NEW TELEVISION CENTER, FRENCH EMBOFFS HAVE DENIED THERE IS SUCH DIRECT RELATION OR THAT FRENCH PREPARED UNDERTAKE SUCH A PROJECT.
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